

AMERICAN
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- Imperfect Storm - Michael Barton
- In Memory of Mille Totushek

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REGIONAL MEDALLION
AWARD**

"L.A. TIMES"



By Song Mog Cho, M.Photos., CPP

aci



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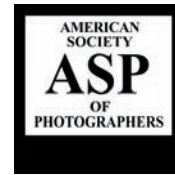
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MAGAZINE



Party on.

I had the opportunity to travel to Korea this past month to represent PPA at the Pacific Rim Print Competition and to also give a program to the Professional Photographers of Korea.

Here's a group that takes photography seriously - and yet, they know how to have fun. The most impressive part? At their awards banquet they had a special presentation for all their new PPA Masters.

Amazing.

The pagentry, the flowers, the way they took great pride in earning this degree.

Sometimes I think we take our hard work for granted. But when I saw how they honored those who were now Masters, I knew it wouldn't be long before we have a new Fellow from Korea.

Sae Lee, M.PhotoG., F-ASP, of Los Angeles is their "sponsor" and is an ASP Fellow and, I'm sure, under his guidance, there will be more.

And when there are, we'd better be ready because these guys know how to celebrate.

Congratulations and thank you, PPK.

Kalen

On the Cover.

Song Mog Cho, M. Photog., CPP, photographed this image while on a cross country visit to the U.S. this past January after receiving his Master of Photography Degree at Imaging 2010 in Nashville.



Song Mog Cho
Seoul, South Korea

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Depth of field is an important element in the success of an image and is based on the idea that not every part of an image needs to be in sharp focus. Good image design mandates that the photographer understand depth of field and the principles involved in the control of depth of field. Frequently, as in many landscape images, the image is designed with the idea of using a deep depth of field. Also, when taking a group photograph, one selects a setting to achieve a sufficient depth of field to keep the group in sharp focus. On the other hand, when taking a portrait of an individual, a controlling concept in the design of the image may be to use a "shallow" depth of field, or selective focus. This concept of controlling the depth of field, which is frequently a necessary creative element in our images, is often misunderstood.

Depth of field is defined as that part of the image that appears sharp. There are several factors that impact just how far the depth of field visually extends within the image. Depth of field or the sharpness of the image is actually based on a continuum of sharpness that changes from parts of the image that may be extremely sharp to parts of the image that are very fuzzy or out of focus. The change of sharpness within most images is almost imperceptible as the change is not abrupt from sharp to unsharp, but is a gradual change or transition. (See Appendix Four. For a historical note see Appendix Five.)

A lens can only precisely focus at one subject distance or plane of focus at any one time (London 54); the decrease in sharpness occurs both in front and behind the actual point of focus. This is a gradual change and the area of apparent sharpness is the "depth of field." This area of sharpness or depth of field extends one-third in front of the point of focus and two-thirds behind the point of focus. Just how much is considered in focus



is affected by several factors. Some images exhibit a great depth of field, or "deep focus," while other images exhibit less depth of field, or a shallow depth of field. The idea of a shallow depth of field may also be expressed as "selective focus."

The specific amount of depth of field, or area that is considered to be in sharp focus, is the result of several factors. While depth of field is a photographic principle that is used everyday and is important to the success of many photographs, many photographers do not fully understand the

intricate details of how this principle works. There are, in fact, five components to the control of depth of field: aperture, camera target size, lens focal length, camera to subject distance, and the image viewing size. Each of these has real control, or it has an apparent contribution as to how one sees depth of field and sharpness.

Many newer photographers as well as some older photographers do not have a complete understanding of the control of depth of field. At the heart of this lack of understanding one finds the "Smart" cameras that dominate photography. In the past cameras were used entirely in a manual mode. Most modern cameras are capable of doing much of the "thinking" or exposure calculations and focusing for photographers so that many photographers have forgotten or never had to learn many of the fundamental principles of photography, especially depth of field.

Even though the adventurous photographer may use other automatic modes and even dare to use the manual mode, in this age of cameras with program exposure modes and auto focus many photographers do not fully understand the implications of the selections, whether made by the camera's computerized algorithm or the educated guesses of the photographer-operator. This is especially true with depth of field.

Another issue in the fact that many have a lack of understanding about depth of field is the fact that most modern lenses no longer have a depth of field scale (Image courtesy of "Depth of Field"). Once relied on by many photographers, new photographers do not know what a depth of field scale on the lens is; nor do they look up a "depth of field" table for their lenses or a depth of field calculator that can be found online at several web sites.

The controls over depth of field can be considered absolute, that is, have a direct impact on the amount of depth of field. Other controls have

Depth of Field

The Misunderstood Element in Image Design

By Dr. Glenn Cope,
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2010 ASP Educational Associate Recipient

an apparent control or relative control. All are important considerations in the puzzle of depth of field and must be understood and utilized in the design of images.

Two controls or factors directly impact the amount of depth of field that is captured: aperture and the target size. While other controls impact the amount of depth of field that we see in the image, they are "relative" to other factors. The absolute controls will be discussed first.

The most common piece of the depth of field puzzle that most photographers consider is the aperture or the f-stop selection. The choice in aperture is a primary consideration in the control of depth of field. The aperture is the opening in the lens, controlled by a series of blades that allows a very specific amount of light into the camera, which is calibrated by the f-numbering system 1.

In photographic practice, the use of the f-number and the word "aperture" are commonly interchanged. While this seems to be a harmless practice, the accomplished photographer needs to understand the difference. As a practical distinction, the f-number is a light transmission value based on a fraction of the available light that is transmitted through the lens. A value of f/1 theoretically transmits the full value of the ambient light outside the camera to the light-sensitive medium during the exposure process. This would be one hundred percent of the intensity of the external light. In other words, the intensity of the light outside the camera at the moment of exposure is the same intensity of light that reaches the film or image sensor. Therefore, when the f-number is reduced by one full stop of exposure, or is now at f/1.4, the intensity of the light that reaches the imaging medium is now one half or fifty percent of

Depth of Field - Continued Pg. 6

that light intensity outside the camera. The process continues so that at f/2 one-quarter or twenty-five percent of the light reaches the imaging medium and so on as one changes the setting to smaller apertures. Therefore the f-number is a measurement of the light transmission.

The word "aperture," which is commonly interchanged with a particular f-number may be seen as the actual size of the opening in the lens. Part of the formula that is used to figure the f-number is the aperture size. While in a practical usage f-number and aperture may be used interchangeably, the aperture is the size of the opening in the lens. The mathematical formula for obtaining the f-number is to take the focal length of the lens and divide it by the aperture diameter, thus yielding the f-number.

Thus the formula is seen as: Therefore, if a 100 mm lens has an aperture diameter of 25 mm the f-number is f/4 as 25 is divided into 100 four times. If a 200 mm lens has the same 25 mm aperture the f-number is now f/8. By writing the f-number in this fashion it serves as a reminder that the f-number is actually a fraction as seen in the above equation. But another way of looking at this is that f/8 represents an aperture that is one-eighth of the focal length.

While the aperture and f-number value are inextricably related, depth of field is determined by the aperture size in relation to the lens. So the average photographer who thinks about depth of field does so by referring to the f-stop, which is easier in practice. It is cumbersome to refer back to the formula to discover the actual size of the aperture. Therefore, as a general practice, depth of field is commonly related to the f-numbering system. However, a specific f-number does not produce the same depth of field in different focal-length lenses. Depth of field as a related to the size of aperture is a function of the physical properties of the lens. Lenses are made with inflexible materials, glass and plastic, and can only focus on one point at a time. Depth of field is important, as one usually desires more to be in focus than a single point in the image. Light entering the lens from the point of focus is transmitted and refracted so that it is now in focus at the plane of focus in the camera. That is, if the lens is focused on the subject at ten feet in front of the camera, that subject plane will be focused on the film or digital sensor. However, light from other subjects at different distances will exhibit varying qualities of focus based on the circles of confusion.

Focus must be understood. Focus is derived from the light entering the lens and passing through the aperture, which will then cast a "circle" at the plane of focus. To fully comprehend this, one must realize that the light striking the lens from the subject does so at every conceivable area on the surface of the lens. Now consider that if we measure in concentric circles on the surface of the lens and if this could be measure in infinitely small increments, circles will be placed as we move from the center of the lens to the outside edge of the lens. All of the light from the focused subject will enter the lens at those given circles. As the light passes through the lens it is projected in small cones of light, called circles of confusion. See Appendix One for an illustration.

Light from the point of focus produces circles of confusion that are small enough to be considered "in focus" but light from different distances may or may not be considered in focus. In other words, some of the light from different distances will produce larger circles of confusion and, thereby, be out of focus.

Focus is a measurement of the size of the circle of confusion. At some point the size of this cone of light, or circle of confusion, gets too large and is "out of focus." This area of "acceptable" focus is "depth of field." The visual perception of the size of this circle of confusion depends upon the viewing distance. Just how blurry does the circle of confusion get before it is considered "out of focus" or unsharp?

To evaluate the sharpness of a circle of confusion, the standard viewing distance is ten inches and the diameter for the circle of confusion is judged at 1/100 inch for a 6x8-inch print (Stroebel 151). McHugh notes that a person with 20-20 vision can distinguish features smaller than this; therefore he states that the circle of confusion should be judged even smaller. Stroebel points out that different studies have demonstrated that the tables and charts for depth of field that are produced by lens manufacturers reveal the values that the manufacturers use may range from 1/70 to 1/200 of an inch (151). Reichmann has noted that camera manufacturers use different standards for figuring the circle of confusion based on degree of enlargement necessary from the film format, meaning that large format and medium format cameras were held to a less strict standard based on the fact that images from these formats

would not be enlarged as much as an image from a 35 mm format 3.

The perception of focus is affected by one's eyesight, familiarity with the subject, and one's personal criteria for sharpness. On the techni-

$$\frac{\text{Lens Focal Length}}{\text{Aperture Diameter}} = f\text{-Number}$$

cal side, the perception of focus is affected by "the tonal contrast between the circle and the background" and the level of illumination (Stroebel 151). Merklinger proposed that distant objects, which are smaller in the image, need to have smaller circles of confusion in order to be recognized or considered sharp, while closer objects, being larger in the image, may be judged "sharp" even though the circles of confusion are larger (65-68). Englander has a similar point of view.

The definition of depth of field is a determination of how much of the image is in focus⁴ as a matter of distance from the camera to infinity. The traditional view of the area of depth of field is that it extends one-third in front of the actual point of focus and two-thirds behind the point of focus. The views of Merklinger and Englander, mentioned above, challenge this view. Merklinger, based on the idea that different sizes of circles of confusion may yield "acceptable" focus would put the formula at one-half in front of the point of focus and one-half behind. Whichever view is taken, the size of the aperture directly impacts, not just how much light enters the camera, but controls how much of that light entering from the different concentric circles and that changes the depth of field.

As the size of the aperture decreases, less light enters the camera, but the light that is eliminated is the light that comes from the outside areas of the lens. This part of the lens is the part that produces the most refraction. Refraction is necessary to bring it into focus, but the light that is brought into focus is that light from the point of focus and as light that comes from beyond or in front of the point of focus will not be refracted, or focused, exactly at the focal plane, thus producing ever increasing circles of confusion, which are, at some point, judged to be out of focus. Thus light coming from outside the point of exact focus will be refracted the most at the outer portions of the lens, and will produce the circles of confusion

Depth of Field - Continued Pg. 7

that are larger, or more out of focus, than the same light coming from the center of the lens. The light coming from distances other than the focus distance will come to a sharp focus if it is passing through the center of the lens, that is, it will produce smaller circles of confusion.

In a practical sense, when the aperture is closed down light that comes from the part of the lens that is less refracted, thereby giving a greater depth of field, or one could perform the opposite action, opening up and using light that is refracted more, to achieve less depth of field.

Depth of field can be figured with this basic idea:

The author does not want to introduce too many algebraic formulas, but this basic formula above when applied would be figured this way:

In this formula F is the focal length; D is the subject distance; c is the circle of confusion; and f_n is the f-number. This basic formula applies to general photography and intermediate focus distances, but it does not apply to macro or close-up photography; nor does it take into consideration any errors in focus (Depth of Field). This writer has not repeated the formulas for figuring the depth of field that vary with the distance. The formulas change with close-up photography and when the hyperfocal distance is used.

Hyperfocal distance is the relationship of infinity to depth of field. Hyperfocal distance is commonly defined in two ways. First, when the camera is focused on the infinity setting, the closest point in focus that is achieved through depth of field provides the hyperfocal distance. The second method of figuring hyperfocal distance is based on using a depth of field scale or table to figure the focusing point that would allow the depth of field to include infinity (Stroebel 152). This second method would yield a greater amount of the image to be in focus. It is a maximization of the depth of field principles.

A standard formula for figuring the hyperfocal distance is given in the following illustration. The explanation is: F is the lens focal length, N is the f-number, and c is the circle of confusion.

Two issues may reduce the depth of field. First, the problem of "defocus," or defocus aberration, has some impact on depth of field. Defocus is simply an area that is out of focus. This reduces the sharpness and contrast in the image. "Optically, defocus refers to a translation along the optical axis away from the plane or surface of best focus" (Defocus Aberration). The amount of focus shift depends inversely on the lens aper-



ture. Low f-numbers, such as $f/1.4$, show more defocus aberration. This may impact depth of field, but since the depth of field is so shallow at this range, the impact is visually difficult to discern. Second, light passing through the aperture, the diffraction of the light, produces some degradation of the image. While stopping down lessens the problem of defocus aberration, using very small apertures may result in loss of sharpness due to diffraction.

At large apertures with a shallow depth of field the "aperture degradation" effect is not as noticeable as with a small aperture. The percentage of the light that is diffracted is greater when using a small aperture as opposed to the percentage of diffracted light with a large aperture. This "percentage of diffraction" increases as the aperture is stopped down. While the smallest aperture may produce the greatest depth of field, the overall sharpness may be compromised by diffraction. This, however, is a greater issue for macro photography rather than general photography (Gibson 53). In general, an aperture in the middle range of a lens produces the "sharpest" image as a result of depth of field, combined with a lessening of defocus aberration, a problem at the widest aperture, and the percentage of diffraction, which reaches its greatest effect with the smallest apertures.

Fortunately, in practice the relationship of the f-number and depth of field is a relatively simple one. Changing the f-number is a convenient method of control. As the f-number is doubled, the depth of field is doubled, making the depth of

field directly proportional to the f-number (Stroebel 154). Merklinger states that stopping down a lens by one stop yields about a forty percent increase in depth of field and conversely opening the lens one stop yields approximately thirty percent decrease in depth of field.

Therefore, the aperture is a major contributing factor in the control of the amount of depth of field that the photographer uses for the design of the image. However, when the aperture fails to give sufficient control then other factors must be considered.

TARGET SIZE

The second contributing factor to the control of depth of field that is a direct control is the target size of the capture medium. The target size is the film format or the size of the imaging sensor in a digital camera. There is no difference in depth of field calculations for digital as opposed to film (Reichmann).

Depth of field is directly related to the target size. As the target size or format of the capture medium gets smaller the coverage of the lens produces more depth of field. The depth of field produced by $f/5.6$ and a normal lens on a film 8x10 format would be considered very "shallow," while this aperture on a small point-and-shoot digital camera with a small sensor will produce a much greater depth of field.

Photographers who used large format, medium format, and

Depth of Field - Continued Pg. 8

35 mm format cameras realized that a specific aperture on each format produced far different results as far as depth of field was concerned. Those who use movie film quickly learned that principle when one switched from a 35mm movie camera to an 8 mm format the depth of field was considerably more.

This is a point that is not understood by many photographers who have only used digital cameras. While many may recognize that the depth of field produced by one's point-and-shoot is different from the depth of field produced by one's dSLR, the reason for this difference is not usually understood.

The larger target size requires a longer lens to achieve a "normal" perspective; so the relationship of wide angle to telephoto focal lengths changes with each target size. McHugh argues this target-size effect is ultimately the result of lens magnification (McHugh). However, the effect of lens magnification is nullified, in that the relationship of wide to normal to telephoto is adapted to the format or target size. This relationship of focal lengths is based on the target size; the "normal" lens is approximately equal to the diagonal of the format or target size. A normal lens for a 4x5 may take the same, or similar, angle of view as a normal for a small digital sensor, and the resulting images demonstrate a "normal" perspective in both, but a distinctly different depth of field. McHugh argues that the variable is the lens magnification, however, the magnification is in relationship to the target size. See the following section on lens focal length for more discussion.

One must realize the impact of the target size: As the target size gets smaller the depth of field increases, and, conversely, as the target size increases the depth of field is smaller. The ultimate consideration is that the larger the target size the more control the photographer has over depth of field in his or her images. Thus, for a given target size, depth of field is determined by three factors: the f-number, the focal length of the lens, and the camera-to-subject distance.

APPARENT CONTROLS

Three controls produce an apparent control over Depth of Field: focal length of the lens, distance from camera to subject, and the resulting image size. These are "apparent" because the control is not "absolute" but is relative to the final image. Nevertheless, all three are important controls, but they are also directly linked to the idea of magnification as it relates to depth of field.

FOCAL LENGTH

A factor in the apparent control of depth of field is the lens focal length selection. As a general rule, a wide-angle lens produces greater depth of field, a normal lens displays less depth of field, and a telephoto yields even less depth of field.

The idea of "perspective" must be understood along with the depth of field effect. Perspective is actually controlled by camera-to-subject distance not actually by the lens choice. This is demonstrated by taking an image with all three types of lenses from exactly the same camera-to-subject distance. If one prints a full-format image from each of the three images the perspective appears different, that is, the spatial relationships demonstrate the effects of using the different lenses. The perspective and depth of field appear different. However, if the resulting images are cropped so that each image now displays the same content, the resulting perspective and depth of field now appear to be the same. The images may be different in terms of grain or pixilation, but the cropped images all look the same. This shows that the spatial relationships and depth of field are now the same.

This effect is related to the subject magnification. So the depth of field factor of the "cropped" images now exhibits the same depth of field. This is true if the camera-to-subject distance was maintained and the cropping produced the same image content. The full-format images seemed to show a difference in depth of field and perspective, but the resulting cropped images now are the same. Thus, cropping, or magnification, reduces the depth of field (Stroebe 153).

MAGNIFICATION

Magnification and the resulting loss of depth of field can be achieved by using longer, or telephoto, lenses or by cropping the image taken with a shorter lens (McHugh). Therefore, lens selection is a contributing factor in the control of depth of field, but it is relative to the magnification of final image. The more an image is cropped, or magnified, then the depth of field appears to decrease.

This discussion assumes a symmetrical lens design, however, any increase in depth of field due to asymmetrical lens design is only of some benefit to close-up or macro photography.

As a contributing factor to depth of field, the selection of lens focal length remains an important contribution to the control of depth of field.

In the above factor of lens selection, the camera-to-subject distance was kept constant. In this factor, the camera-to subject distance changes. The general rule is that as the distance from camera to subject decreases the depth of field decreases and as the distance increases the depth of field increases. This is a standard rule for those who practice macro photography. Ultra close up images show a very shallow depth of field. The use of asymmetrical macro lenses may help with the shallow depth of field encountered in macro photography. Still, those who practice macro photography generally use very small apertures to counteract the shallow depth of field caused by the ultra close up camera positions. Newer digital techniques of "focus stacking" for macro photography combines multiple images taken at differing focus points to combine into a single image with great depth of field (Focus Stacking). But this is not a single, original image.

Again, this is a relative control of depth of field. Take an image of a subject at ten feet and again take an image of the same subject at five feet, keeping the lens focal length and aperture the same in both images. Producing a full frame image of each exposure the depth of field will appear deeper in the image taken at ten feet and the closer image will show a shallower depth of field. However, if the image taken at ten feet is cropped



to that the subject size is the same as the image taken at five feet, the resulting images will demonstrate a depth of field that is similar. This also is an effect of magnification.

Yet, as a practical application, the general rule of distance is important in controlling depth of field.

IMAGE SIZE

The last consideration in the puzzle of depth of field is the final output size of the image and the magnification of the image. Many photog-

Depth of Field - Continued Pg. 9

ographers are familiar with the problem of what happened when the 8x10 was made. For example, looking at the 4x6's the images look good. They seem to have great depth of field, but when the images are blown up to 8x10 size the depth of field seems to diminish.

To understand this problem, one must go back to the concept of "circles of confusion." The image is formed on the film or digital sensor in circular patterns based on the light coming through the lens. The establishment of "sharpness" is a measurement of the circle of confusion in relation to the captured image as it printed onto a print.

Looking at the 4x6's the circles of confusion have not been enlarged as much, thereby remaining smaller, which give the impression of greater depth of field. But if the image is made into a 16x20 the circles of confusion are enlarged. Those that would be considered "sharp" in the 8x10 are now less sharp at 16x20. The circles of confusion will be enlarged two times in a 16x20 as compared to an 8x10-inch print (Stroebe 153).

This changes our impression of depth of field. So the 4x6 looked as if it had great depth of field, but now the 16x20 looks as if the depth of field is shallow.

There is a second part of this problem; an 8x10 is designed to be viewed at approximately one foot up to an arm's length. If we move the 8x10 further away to about three feet, the image seems to get sharper and the depth of field begins to look like that 4x6! Visually, we are viewing the 8x10 at the same size as the 4x6.

This is the billboard phenomenon. Billboards are designed to be viewed from a distance of a hundred feet or more and while driving by at highway speed. Images viewed this way appear sharp and show good depth of field. But if you could stop and walk up to within ten feet of the billboard image it would look far less sharp and the depth of field would not be great.

Stroebe states that to judge sharpness a 6x8-inch or larger print must be made without cropping. The closest viewing distance from which to judge sharpness should be a diagonal of the print size. This would mean that the 6x8-inch image should be viewed at ten inches and the closest allowable distance from which to judge the sharpness of a 16x20-inch print would be twenty-five and one-half inches.

But when looking for depth of field, if the 16x20-inch print is viewed from double the distance as the 8x10, then visually the depth of field would appear to be the same, but when

viewed at the same, closer distance, as the 8x10, the 16x20 exhibits a smaller depth of field (Stroebe 153). An image should be viewed at the distance from which it was designed to be viewed. Viewing a 16x20 from one foot will reveal less sharpness and depth of field than if viewed from four to six feet. To state that the billboard is "out of focus" after it has been viewed from six feet would be an unfair criticism of the billboard.

Therefore, an important consideration in depth of field would be the image size and the viewing distance. This is another important consideration in the design of our images: plan on the final image size and viewing distance.

Two more factors that have some apparent effect of depth of field are the Scheimpflug principle and the sharpening performed in digital imaging.

The Scheimpflug principle is considered by some as having an effect on depth of field. This principle is one commonly used by cameras with adjustable swings and tilts such as large format cameras. The Scheimpflug principle has a visual effect on depth of field, but it comes not from changing the aperture, but a change in plane of focus. When using a camera without these adjustments, or by leaving the swings and tilts in the "normal" position, the axis of the lens is perpendicular to the image plane, then the plane of focus is parallel to the image plane, and the depth of field extends between parallel planes on either side of the point of focus. When using the Scheimpflug principle, the lens, either by a swing or tilt, is rotated which will alter the plane of focus and this gives a different visual look to the depth of field. Still the aperture controls the actual amount of depth of field at this point. Therefore, the depth of field has not been changed by the Scheimpflug principle, but the depth of field along an altered plane of focus can dramatically change the visual appearance of the depth of field.

Digital cameras apply a certain amount of sharpening, which will have some impact on the depth of field. If this is performed in camera, the menu setting normally allows the user to increase or decrease the default setting for the amount of sharpening desired. When shooting in RAW the software interface now allows the user to set the amount of sharpening in postproduction. In either case this has some impact on depth of field.

If the settings are placed at no sharpening, then the depth of field that is captured by the image sensor is not enhanced. But this depth

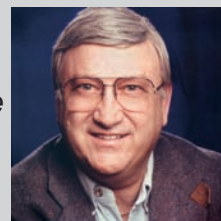
of field could be slightly less than the depth of field captured by film. This is directly related to the size of the image sensor. Theoretically, the depth of field should compare with film capture, when the digital camera, or RAW converter, is set at the default setting. The depth of field can be enhanced when the amount of sharpening is increased over the default setting. Of course, this may raise problems with "over sharpening."

CONCLUSION

Good photographic art demands that one know when some elements of the image should be "out of focus" and when some elements should be in sharp focus. The purpose of this paper has been to show the intricate details of understanding depth of field and how to control depth of field in our images. While there seems to be a lot of information in books and on the Internet about depth of field, critical information and a complete discussion is difficult to find. Most sources designed for the beginner seem to discuss the basic elements of aperture and focal length, with a few discussing format size.

This paper has tried to combine all the necessary elements for the complete understanding of depth of field, thus to give the advanced photographer more insight on the complete control of depth of field. In the end, the traditional advice of understanding the effects of aperture on depth of field is the obvious place to start for a beginner, but for the advanced photographer developing a critical understanding of the other elements discussed in this paper is an essential component in mastering the art of photography.

Dr. Glenn Cope is a Certified Professional Photographer, a Photographic Craftsman and an Approved Photographic Instructor. He owns Creative Photography in Tonkawa, Oklahoma, and was the recipient of the 2010 ASP Educational Associate.



The environment that professional photographers currently find themselves in is one where families, couples and decision makers are extremely busy and prefer to find out as much as possible about the photographers before ever stepping foot in the studio. Marketing to these clients has changed enough that now photographers must have an effective internet marketing program to reach their target market. This thesis will discuss a brief history of the internet, elements of an internet marketing program and how to increase the probability of consumers finding the business on the internet.

2010 ASP Educational Associate Thesis

The Effective Internet Marketing Program

By John Stein, Cr. Photog., CPP, API, EA-ASP

History

The internet became available to the public in the late 1980's, but due to limited access and high costs it was not considered feasible or necessary for a photographer to utilize it as a marketing tool. Many television cable and telecommunications companies began offering internet services during the mid 1990's, which not only increased accessibility but lowered costs. Now, over 77% of the adults in the United States have access to the internet (Thurman 2008).

The internet has become such a common part of our lives that photographers are now finding if they are not marketing via the internet then they simply do not exist (Thurman 2008). Many consumers are abandoning traditional means of locating companies, such as the yellow pages, in favor of the internet.

"I know that I personally use the web for looking up anything and everything I need. I don't use a business without checking out their website first. Yellow pages are useless to me. All you get is a name and a phone number. I shop on-line, and I always order pizza on-line." (Beers)

"Think about this for a moment. Do you own and use a phone book anymore? I, as well as many I know, immediately go to the web.....it is an easier and more comprehensive source of information." (Osgood)

The information contained on the internet has grown so vast that consumers can now find out anything they want about companies.

"With the click of a mouse, you can find nearly anything on the web these days, from a public company's earnings, to a private company's business descriptions to pricing schedules and office locations." (Kaplan)

An internet presence at one time was considered to be a luxury item but now consumers expect professional photographers to be on the internet.

"In this era of digital imaging and information technology, some sort of presence on the web is absolutely mandatory for every photographer. Whether it's just a simple portfolio page with contact information, or a full-blown storefront, you not only have to use the web, but not using it can hurt your business." (Heller)

Photographers and consumers think of websites when internet marketing is mentioned. While websites are the major portion of an effective internet marketing plan

they are only a piece of the puzzle. Other parts of the puzzle are web logs, e-mail newsletters and internet communities (My Space, Facebook). Additionally photographers are able to sell images on-line.

Elements of an Internet Marketing Program

Websites.

Websites have been accepted as a valuable tool for marketing any type of business, but why should a photographer have a website? This question was asked, along with 10 other questions (graphical analysis is presented in the appendix), in a survey conducted in April 2007 via the Professional Photographers of America's (PPA) forum and through various PPA affiliated groups. The survey received responses from 256 professional photographers. Photographers responded as follows:

- 168 or 66% responded it was to increase exposure
- 75 or 29% responded it was a good source of advertising
- 13 or 5% stated it was because everyone else had one

A website is essential for advertising to recently engaged couples. One of the first things a newly engaged bride will do is start searching the internet. Most brides who are attending bridal shows already have their photographer hired and are just browsing to get ideas on dresses, cakes and posing ideas for their wedding photographs (Dunphy).

"I used to participate in five to six bridal shows a year. I have recently reduced the number to two a year. My decision to do this is based on the fact that at one bridal show over 90% of the brides I spoke with had already hired their photographer. The common answer I was given when asked how they found their photographer was on the internet. I would much rather spend my advertising money on a good, effective website than on a bridal show that brings in little or no business." (Hayre)

Photographers that deal in destination weddings and portraits are probably best served by having a website. A photographer who is located in Hawaii or Las Vegas would have to spend a large amount of money to reach all of the areas that potential clients may be located. The website allows them to reach these clients in a cost effective manner.

Internet Marketing - cont. next page.

Many magazines are now offering internet versions of their publications as a means to increase revenue and exposure. Examples of magazines that offer an on-line version are *Modern Bride*, *The Knot* and *Perfect Wedding Guide*.

Web Logs.

Many photographers have started using Web logs (Blogs for short) as another form of internet marketing. Professional Photographer magazine called blogs "The Must Have Spring Accessory" (Kent).

Blogs are on-line journals that provide two way communications between the photographer and current or potential clients. They require very little, if any, web design knowledge to create or maintain.

Blogs have become a very cost effective (sometimes free) way for photographers to create an internet presence to not only be capable of displaying their photography, but also be able to show their personality. The photographer is able to show his or her personality by responding to questions that the clients post to the blog. Blogs can be the photographer's main website, can be stand alone (separate from a website but linking to the photographer's main site) or can be an integral part of their website. Photographers who already have a website for their business may do well by keeping the blog as a separate component. This increases exposure by having a second internet presence, however the website and the blog should be linked together to allow clients easy access to both sites.

Photographers must be aware that since a blog is an open forum and anyone can post to it, a client who may not be happy with his or her images or experience can actually cause problems. Posting to most blogs does not have to be approved and since no one can sit and watch their blog 24 hours a day there is always the possibility of negative comments being read by prospective clients.

Email/Electronic Newsletters.

Hard copy newsletters have always been considered a valuable marketing tool. All too often, however, the newsletters go unread, get thrown away, are not delivered in a timely fashion or are never delivered.

Since the cost of creating a hard copy newsletter keeps increasing as a result of both printing and postage many photographers are using email/electronic newsletters. These newsletters are easy to create and can be delivered quickly.

There are several companies available that allow any small business to create and deliver electronic newsletters. Constant Contact and Vertical Response are two of the most popular companies. Both of these companies allow a small business owner to create and maintain email distribution lists and have newsletter templates that can be used with or without any modifications.

One benefit of using email/electronic newsletters is the cost. Consider that creating and mailing a four page hard copy newsletter to 500 clients would cost \$885.00. The cost is broken down as follows:

- \$675.00 for 500 newsletters printed by a quality print company (Blossom)
- \$210.00 for mailing 500 newsletters

Sending the same newsletter as an electronic file using Constant Contact would cost \$15.00 a month (Constant Contact). That is a flat fee for up to 500 email addresses no matter how many times or different messages are sent.

Other benefits of using companies such as Constant Contact and Vertical Response are:

- They track how many newsletters are opened
- Record how many were deleted with out opening
- Inform the photographer if any recipients forwarded the email to someone else
- Record how many recipients clicked on any of the links contained in the newsletter
- Will alert the photographer to any undelivered (bounced) newsletters.

Internet Communities.

Internet communities such as Facebook and MySpace have been gaining popularity with the public. Only MySpace will be discussed since both of these communities are very similar.

MySpace has quickly become a place for teenagers and young adults to share information, photographs and gossip. Several photographers have recognized MySpace as a free and easy way to market to both high school seniors and young adults.

Naomi Angel was able to turn her senior photography business around using MySpace. She provides images that are web ready, color-corrected and watermarked with her studio information to her high school senior clients. As an additional service to the client she will post an image to their MySpace account in the comments section. The clients will often use the images she has provided them in their own MySpace galleries (Kent).

Some photographers will not provide clients with images but will post clients images to their (the photographers) own MySpace gallery and require the client to make them a MySpace friend, allowing image sharing between them.

"I require the kids to make me their friend, and then I upload a gallery for them and share it. Since I am now their friend, I now have all their friends to market to. I join the same groups that they are in and then send them invitations to join me for things. I don't over do it, but it does work well when I use it." (Moss).

Selling Images On-Line.

Photographers selling images through an on-line gallery to clients is probably one of the most debated items there is. If 40 different photographers were asked how they feel about selling images on-line, 40 different answers may be given.

Some reasons that photographers will not sell on-line to clients is that they feel you can't sell a wall portrait without actually showing the client the difference in sizes. There is also a concern that the client's monitors will not accurately render colors and sales will decrease the longer the images are on-line (Hoffman).

While these concerns have merit, other photographers take a different outlook. These photographers feel that what they don't make from selling a wall portrait they more than make up for by selling more of the smaller images to a larger number of people. The argument here is that while during a premiere of images for a portrait session in the studio they may only have the immediate family present. Sometimes the immediate family is hesitant to purchase finished portraits for grandparents, aunts and uncles. Images that are posted on-line may be viewed by everyone and they can order the images they want. This is even a larger factor when it is a wedding because of the number of people involved.

Another reason for selling images on-line is that the client may view their images when it is convenient

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for them. Many photographers have sat in the studio waiting for a client to come in to view their images and they never show up, or they come in and not all members are present so a decision isn't made. With an on-line gallery these problems are eliminated (Hayre).

Recent studies have shown that consumers are spending more money online. Part of this is because of convenience and some is because of rising gas costs. The most recent study available is for the year 2005 which shows consumer spending on-line accounted for 6% of all retail sales. On-line sales increased from 117.2 billion dollars in 2004 to 143.2 billion dollars in 2005, this is an increase of 22% in just one year (Gon-salves).

The survey that was conducted on the PPA forum and through various PPA affiliates in 2007 showed that of the 256 respondents, 156 or 61% of them sold images on-line. The survey asked the photographers who responded, "yes, they sold images on-line," if sales increased, decreased or remained the same. The answers to these questions are surprising considering the accepted idea that sales decrease with images being placed on-line:

- 100 or 64% responded that sales increased
- 44 or 28% responded that sales remained the same
- 12 or 8% responded that sales decreased

Increasing Visibility on the Internet.

Many photographers on the internet have not seen the increase in business they were expecting. This is a result of potential clients being unable to find their website/blog. Unfortunately, there is no quick fix to this problem. It takes either time, money or a combination of both.

Since websites are the major factor of any internet marketing program the discussion of increasing visibility on the internet will concentrate on websites. Other elements, such as blogs, internet communities and email/electronic newsletters will be addressed as to how they tie in to increasing traffic to the website.

The easiest way to increase traffic to a website is to increase the website's ranking on search engines. This is done by conducting a Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Many businesses elect to have a company that specializes in SEO do this for them. Even though a business elects to have an SEO done by an outside vendor, it is recommended the business be familiar with the process to

ensure the optimization is done correctly.

Search engines index web sites and look at several different items in considering how a site is ranked. The three most common items are:

- Content
- Internal Links
- Inbound Links

To better explain what these items are, a fictitious company, Happy Harry's Wedding Photography, located in Santa Fe, New Mexico, will be used.

Content

The content of a website is the most important of these items and should center on keywords. Keywords are words or phrases that a potential client may type in to a search engine in an attempt to locate businesses and services.

Happy Harry's business is strictly wedding photography and he photographs only in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The keywords that Harry could use may be as general as "Wedding Photography" or as specific as "Wedding Photography in Santa Fe New Mexico". The more specific a keyword is the more targeted the audience. A recent search on Google for various keywords had the following results:

- Wedding Photography found 21,800,000 websites
- Wedding Photography in Santa Fe New Mexico found 8,180, 000 websites
- New Mexico Wedding Photographers found 684,000 websites
- Santa Fe New Mexico Wedding Photographer found 34,600 websites
- Wedding Photographer in Santa Fe New Mexico found 30,800 websites

It is easy to see from the above examples that more specific keywords return fewer websites. The best options for Harry's main keywords are Santa Fe New Mexico Wedding Photographer and Wedding Photographer in Santa Fe New Mexico. Secondary keywords could be Wedding Photographs in Santa Fe New Mexico and Wedding Photography in Santa Fe New Mexico. This could be carried out even further by substituting NM for New Mexico.

Now that keywords for Harry's business have been identified he must decide where to use them. There are many places they may be used but the main places are listed below with justification in the paragraphs following (Boswell):

- Domain Name
- Page Titles
- Meta Phrases and Keywords
- First Paragraph on the Home Page

- Alternate Text for Images
- Domain Name

One of the most overlooked areas keywords should be used in is the domain name or address of the website. Many businesses make the mistake of using either the owner's name (www.happy-harry.com) or the business name (www.happy-harry-wedding-photography.com) as the website address. While this does appear to be the logical choice for a website address it is not typically what consumers will use to search the internet.

The first item on a website a search engine sees is the domain name so the better choice for Harry would be to use the domain name www.wedding-photographer-in-santa-fe-new-mexico.com. Chances are this particular domain name will not be available but it is in the business' best interest to check on the availability. Many businesses that already have a domain name using either the business name or the owner's name would be well served by starting a second website that has a domain name that uses keywords appropriate to the business.

Page Titles

All pages in the website should have a title associated to them. The page title is displayed when a search engine lists the website and pages. The title of the main page (home page) of Harry's business would be Wedding Photographer in Santa Fe New Mexico. Subsequent pages should have similar titles. Businesses increase the content and the number of keywords by having titles on all website pages. Meta Phrases and Meta Keywords The Meta Phrases and Meta Keywords are contained within the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) and are not visible by the consumer. The HTML is the language or code that the computer uses to display the website. The locations of the Meta Keywords and Meta Phrases are in blue.

The Meta keywords for Harry's business would be as follows, <META NAME="keywords" content="Santa Fe New Mexico Wedding Photographer, Wedding Photographer in Santa Fe New Mexico, Wedding Photographs in Santa Fe New Mexico, Wedding Photography in Santa Fe New Mexico">.

Many photographers will also misspell words contained in the Meta Keywords. John Stein, a professional photographer and certified internet webmaster, uses Maryland Wedding Photographer and Maryland Weeding

Photographer as keywords in the Meta Keywords of his website. The reason is whenever you have words with double letters it is easy to misspell them, Wedding becomes Weeding. John's website was the only listing for wedding photographers in Maryland for many years (Stein).

There has been some discussion as to how effective Meta Keywords are. According to some sources, search engines are not putting as much emphasis on Meta Keywords. Google has for many years said they do not read the Meta Keywords of a website.

Danny Sullivan, a contributing writer for www.searchengineland.com, conducted an experiment with his website to see which search engines were actually reading the Meta Keywords. Danny added several phony keywords and waited until he knew the search engines had the most recent version of his site. The results as to which search engines did or did not read the keywords are as follows:

- Google did not
- Microsoft Live did
- Ask did
- Yahoo did

Meta Keywords are still being used by the majority of search engines so it is a good idea to continue using them (Sullivan).

To find out if a business is using Meta Keywords is an easy task. The procedure described here is using Microsoft Internet Explorer 6. Once a website is displayed on the monitor, click on "page" in the menu bar, from the drop down menu click on "view source", and the entire HTML coding for the website will be displayed as a text file (Stein).

The Meta Keywords are entered in to a websites HTML coding by using an HTML editing program or a program such as Microsoft FrontPage or Adobe Dreamweaver.

First Paragraph of the Home Page.

The first paragraph of any website should contain the main keywords. The title and first paragraph of a website's page are what is displayed when a search engine lists the site. These will be the first items the consumer reads on the search engine concerning the businesses website.

• Alternate Text for Images

Alternate text for images was a necessity when the internet first was offered to consumers. The reason being that the internet was so slow that many people viewed websites with the graphics turned off so pages would load faster. Certified Internet Webmaster classes were still recommending that alternate text be used for the same reasons as recently as 2005 (Stein).

Search Engines do not recognize images but they do recognize alternate text. Keywords should be used in the alternate text of the images as another means of increasing content of the website. The text can be added by the webmaster/designer as the website is being designed. The alternate text for image on Harry's website should be similar to Santa Fe New Mexico Wedding Photograph Number 1, Santa Fe New Mexico Wedding Photograph number 2 and so on.

Checking to see if a website uses alternate text for images is accomplished by clicking on "tools", then "internet options", then the "advanced" tab and then un-checking the "show pictures" box. Once this accomplished a box with a red x in it will be displayed along with any alternate text.

Internal Links

Internal links are links to other pages contained in the website. The more links the higher the search engines will rank the site. Basically it comes down to the more internal links the more content on the site, the more content the higher the search engine ranking.

Many photographers will create a gallery page with only three or four images, so all they have is one page. A more effective way to do this is to set up the gallery page and have each image linked a page of its own. This will allow the photographer to add commentary, containing keywords, for each of the images.

External Links

External links are links to the business' site from outside sources. These links could be from internet communities such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, from the business' blog or from other business' websites. The more external links that a website has, the higher it's ranking on search engines.

There are many ways to increase the amount of external links a website has. Members of the PPA are provided with an external link from the PPA

website to their site. Photographers who are members of their state PPA affiliate probably also have a link from the state's website. Some state PPA affiliates provide numerous links for their members. This is done by listing members in the online membership roster, in the consumers search for photographers section and listing members by the degrees that they hold.

Other sources of external links are a link swap, where two or more businesses that work together exchange links. Businesses may also elect to get listed on sites such as www.merchantcircle.com, www.wedj.com, www.thegathering.com, www.weddepot.com and so on. All of these sites provide links back to the business site.

Businesses can easily check to see what external links both Google and Yahoo have associated to their sites. Google is checked by going to www.google.com and in the search box typing `link:yourdomain (link:www.Santa-Fe-New-Mexico-wedding-photographer.com)`. Yahoo is checked by going to www.yahoo.com and in the search box typing `linkdomains:yoururl (linkdomains:www.Santa-Fe-New-Mexico-wedding-photographer.com)` (Stein).

Once an SEO is completed on a website it must be submitted to search engines. Search engines don't just happen to find sites, they must be informed that the site exists. Since there are so many search engines available it is impossible for a business to manually submit its website to all of them. There are many companies that specialize in search engine submissions. Enterurl.com is one of the companies and will submit the website to 3000 search engines once a month for a full year for a fee of \$139. (Stein)

The above steps are all just beginning steps to increasing a business' visibility on the internet. Results of an SEO do not happen overnight, it takes time. There are six items that can be done which will start driving traffic to the website while waiting for the SEO results:

- Email Marketing announcing both the website and updates
- Submit the site to Search Engines and Directories immediately
- Link Exchanges with other businesses
- Set up a signature for emails that includes the website address
- List the website on all office stationary and marketing materials
- Set up a Weblog

Some of the items listed above were previously discussed but they do start to have an effect on website traffic immediately and should be used while the SEO is being conducted (Katz).

Conclusion.

As the amount of “free” time that people have available dwindles more people will be turning to the internet to find products and services. Many photographers have found that they must be on the internet to survive.

Marketing on the internet used to be as simple as having a one page website, with the studio name and phone number, making the consumers aware that the photographer exists. Now photographers must also display their images, display their personality and evolve their business to accommodate consumers who just do not have the time to make a “special” trip to purchase the product.

Photographers have accepted the fact that websites are a good business addition and a great marketing tool. Blogs, MySpace, and Facebook are easy to use and cost effective ways of increasing their presence on the internet. Email/electronic newsletters are cost effective and can be created quickly, giving the photographer flexibility in their marketing. The survey conducted on the PPA forum and through PPA affiliates shows that selling images on-line may also be a good marketing tool since it will increase the number of people who see and possibly purchase photographers’ images.

Creating an internet presence does not guarantee that consumers will find the photographers website. The photographer must conduct an SEO on the website to ensure that they are receiving maximum exposure. The higher a website is ranked on a search engine the more likely the consumer will be able to locate the business.

While all aspects of internet marketing may not be necessary and may not work for all photographers, the prospects of gaining new clients and keeping past ones increases as the number of elements utilized is increased.

John Stein is a Certified Professional Photographer, Photographic Craftsman and an Approved Photographic Instructor. He owns and operates Special Moments Photography in Frederick, Maryland. John was the recipient of the 2010 ASP Educational Associate.



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Be Where Your Clients Are

By Betsy Finn, Cr. Photog., CPP

Expand Your Web Presence

It used to be that having a website was optional; you didn't need a web presence. But today, a website isn't just a necessity; it's the absolute minimum. You probably have a blog (or have been told you should start one). And you may have heard about social sites like MySpace, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. What sort of strategies should you use? Is it worth putting all that effort into your web presence? In short: yes, your web presence can and does influence your studio's bottom line. Here are nine tips to help you refine your web presence.

Be in the Same Circles. If your clients are mostly consumers, you'll want to be on Facebook or MySpace. If you cater to business professionals, check out LinkedIn. In order for your online presence to make a difference, you need to promote the right thing on the right site.

Consistent Branding. Make sure your identity is consistent from site to site. You don't want to make your viewers wonder whether they're in the right place. Once you find an identity that works, stick with it. People don't like change, even if it's better. Remember New Coke? In blind taste tests it beat Coca Cola Classic hands-down. But people identified so strongly with the Coca Cola brand that New Coke failed. By trying to change something that everyone identified with, it diluted the value of the Coca Cola identity. Keep your identity consistent – so you don't compete against yourself for market share. Consistency in branding will ensure your customers can connect that image to your company.

Manage Your Time. One of the downfalls of the internet age is the proliferation of wasted time. You might have been staying away from Facebook or Twitter because you've heard it is unproductive. Well, you can use these tools

productively. For instance, I have my blog set up to "tell" Twitter and Facebook every time I write a blog post; plus, Twitter updates my Facebook status. The more efficiently you can use these different networks, the less time you'll find yourself "wasting."



Be Yourself . The best way to cultivate relationships isn't to force feed everyone your marketing spiel. The "Gen Y" group (born 1982-2001) values personal interaction. You can bridge the generation gap -- but don't try to do it by selling from the soapbox or acting cool. Kids have a keen radar for "fake" coolness, so just be yourself. Be real, share helpful information, talk about the fun session you had.

Blog with a Purpose. Blogging can be hard to do regularly, you say? Not if you have a plan. Make a point to blog about your clients or a special studio event at least once a week. Create an incentive for your clients -- if they spend \$XX, you'll feature them on the blog. This not only gives you something to blog about, but gives them a reason to send all their friends and family to your website. Not a bad publicity stunt, eh? [Note: to avoid sabotaging your portrait order, wait to publish that blog post until after receiving payment.]

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Use Aliases. While seniors may jump with joy to be featured on your blog, your baby plan clients might be a little more hesitant. And here's part of the reason. Would you want your child's name and photo plastered all over the internet? If your client seems hesitant, offer to put the images up with an alias.

Share Images. The fact of the matter is, if you don't put your images online, your clients will. You can educate them all you want. If a senior "needs" to share their graduation portrait and you haven't put it online, they are scanning that wallet. Would you rather have a poor quality scan or a professionally watermarked image floating around? Think of this: when a client shares those images with their friends, you'll get extra publicity if you've included a studio watermark on the images.

Check Your Inbox. Today's teens are more likely to send you a Facebook message than to call or even email you. So if you don't check the inbox on your social networking site often -- make sure you receive copies at your normal email address so you can stay on top of things. If a client (or "future" client) happens to leave a comment on a blog post... make sure to respond.

Media-Driven Society. We are living in a social media world. Printed media is falling by the wayside. News is being disseminated through the web (and Twitter), rather than a printed newspaper. Many people are happy to store a year's worth of personal snapshots on the SD card in their digicam. As photographers, we can't avoid acknowledging these trends. Thankfully, our society has been trying to go paperless for years, unsuccessfully. There still is a demand for printed portraits. We're not completely digital... yet.

What it all comes down to is this: you need to be where your clients are. Even if you're promoting the products your studio offers, you still need to be present online. Your images need to be visible in your clients' world – both online and offline. Take the time to figure out these tools; before you know it you'll be an "old pro!"

Have a question about something in this article? Go to www.learn-withbetsy.com for more information.

Betsy Finn, Cr. Photog., CPP, runs a full service studio in Dexter, Michigan, and received her Craftsman Degree in 2010. She joined ASP in January of 2010.

Visit her website at www.betsysphotography.com.



the imperfect storm

*By Michael Barton
M. Photog., MEI, CPP*

So here you are in the middle of the ocean. There is no land in sight. There's nothing but water, treacherous water. It seems endless. Around you there is only more water. 25 foot surges pounce on you making you feel like a rag doll. You look into the sky and there is nothing but thick, menacing clouds that threaten your very being. You struggle to see a break in the clouds, but it's not there. All the while there is nothing keeping you from the depths of this vast sea but a small row boat and the paddles you grasp like there is no tomorrow. With few resources there is little you can do. You go through your options and their immediate consequence:

You sit in your boat motionless frozen with fear. You die.

You casually row and occasionally put in a stoke or two. You die.

You row moderately and take your time. You die.

You row in circles and knit a beautiful sweater. You die.

It dawns on you that the only way you are going to get out of all of this is to row you tail off and work for dear life to find land or the edge of the storm. In short, you row hard and you row smart. In reality there's still a chance that you may not make it. It doesn't matter, you're going to go out trying. It's pure instinct. At these moments you find out who you really are and what you are capable of. In the back of you mind you know that this storm will pass and brighter days are ahead. You only hope that you will be a part of them. At the end of it all if you survive you'll know that you are prepared for far more that life can bring you. In the end, you know to either stay away from water or get a bigger boat.

Naturally you are wondering what all of this has to do with the business of photography. I hope this scenario got you attention. Let me paint a different one:

Newspapers and media are bombarding you with doomsday messages about the economy, inflation, bankruptcies, foreclosures, political unrest, and corruption. Banks are going under and unemployment is the highest it's been in years. Photography studios are closing, people are losing work, and to make matters worse there is an influx of technology that makes it easier than ever to be a photographer. Clients are able to create their own albums, slideshows, and other products that at one point were only available to professionals. Through unemployment people are turning to the photography industry as an answer. This story is hitting a little closer to home. Indeed, for the moment it's what we call reality.

To take the parallel a little further, you are likely to notice something curious in the midst of your struggles. As you sit in you little row boat rowing for dear life you look up to see an ocean liner cruising by with people sitting comfortably in a beautiful dining room enjoying a fabulous meal with little regard for the world outside. The irony is definitely not lost on you as you row. To the people on the sleek, strolling vessel, there is no irony at all.

Here's how it works. The boat is your business plan and the paddles are your work ethic. We have to learn to captain a row boat before we can run an ocean liner. The reality is that many of us have little choice as to where we are at this moment. We have put ourselves in small boats in the middle of a storm by the decisions we have made with our businesses. We have chosen the wrong boat or rather it was chosen for us. What we do from here however is a choice that we can make no matter where we are in our business.

I'm not one for advice, but we might consider rowing and rowing smart. Just like a storm, the world will part to show us better days. When the sun comes out and our struggles are a thing of the past. When we are getting a tan, playing on the beach, and eating ice cream it might be time to look for a bigger boat or stay the heck away from water.

Michael Barton, M.Photog., MEI, Cr., CPP, is the owner of Indigo Photographic, Inc., in Batavia, Illinois. For more information on Michael, check out his website at www.indigophotographic.com.

In Memory.

Mille Totushek, M.Photog., Cr., F-ASP, 1927-2010

Mildred “Mille” Totushek, M.Photog.Cr., F-ASP - known to some as the “Matriarch” of Wisconsin Photography, passed away April 11, 2010, at age 82.

An award-winning photographer, Mille earned both her Photographic Craftsman and Master of Photography degrees from Professional Photographers of America (PPA), where she’s been a member since 1954. In fact, she was even honored as a Life Member of PPA. In addition, she earned her Fellowship from the American Society of Photographers and was a strong member of the Wisconsin Professional Photographers Association, from whom she received the PPA National Award for outstanding service. She received the highest honor of the American Society of Photographers - the Honorary Fellowship in 2010.

Mille started her career taking photos of equipment at Bucyrus Erie before opening her own studio in 1967, where she created memories for clients, family and friends.

Mille Totushek

One of the things she is most known for is her willingness to share her photographic knowledge and creativity. With her open heart and humor, Mille was a mentor to photographers throughout the United States. She was even honored with PPA’s 2006 Harold Bovee PPA Jurors Meritorious Service Award for her outstanding service to the profession and dedication to the improvement of the association, the International Photographic Competition and the annual International Exhibition of Professional Photography.



She was always there to help. She inspired, motivated and encouraged everyone – so much so, that Wisconsin created an award in her honor. Simply named, the Mille Award, it recognizes an individual for their passion and drive for success and outstanding performance.

To her, we were all her KIDS – many of which had the honor of being invited to be photographed in her backyard shed. She will be dearly missed.

Peter Gowland, 1916-2010

ASP International Award recipient Peter Gowland died March 17 at his Pacific Palisades home of complications from surgery for a broken hip, said his wife of 68 years, Alice.

Gowland, known for his glamour photography, shot more than 1,000 magazine covers, lectured on glamour photography throughout the United States and Europe and was the author of 26 books on photography. Throughout the rest of Gowland’s career, his wife was at his side. She handled picture sales and cataloged the more than 100,000 negatives he shot.



Peter Gowland

Gowland received the International Award in 2007.

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